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4. **(Amended)** A method of quantitating IL-6, said method comprising:

(a) providing a first bone marrow preparation from an individual diagnosed with a multiple myeloma-related plasmaproliferative disorder and a second bone marrow preparation from a normal individual; and

C2 (b) quantitating the amount of IL-6 produced by stromal cells cultured with said first and second bone marrow preparations, wherein progression to multiple myeloma is indicated if said amount of IL-6 produced by stromal cells cultured with said first bone marrow preparation is greater than said amount of IL-6 produced by stromal cells cultured with said second bone marrow preparation, and wherein progression to multiple myeloma is not indicated if said amount of IL-6 produced by stromal cells cultured with said first bone marrow preparation is less than or similar to said amount of IL-6 produced by stromal cells cultured with said second bone marrow preparation.

5. **(Amended)** The method of claim 4, wherein said multiple myeloma-related plasmaproliferative disorder is smoldering multiple myeloma.

C3 8. **(Amended)** The method of any one of claims 1, 2, 4, or 5, wherein said bone marrow preparation is selected from the group consisting of a fresh supernatant from cultured bone marrow cells, a previously frozen supernatant from cultured bone marrow cells and a mononuclear cell preparation purified from bone marrow.

C4 15. **(Amended)** A method of monitoring the status of multiple myeloma in an individual, said method comprising:

a) obtaining an earlier bone marrow preparation and a later bone marrow preparation from said individual, said individual undergoing treatment for multiple myeloma, at least one of said bone marrow preparations obtained after initiation of said treatment; and

b) determining the amount of IL-6 produced by stromal cells cultured with said earlier bone marrow preparation and determining the amount of IL-6 produced by stromal cells cultured with said later bone marrow preparation, wherein progression of said multiple myeloma

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status is indicated if said amount of IL-6 produced by stromal cells cultured with said later bone marrow preparation is greater than said amount of IL-6 produced by stromal cells cultured with said earlier bone marrow preparation, wherein improvement of said multiple myeloma status is indicated if said amount of IL-6 produced by stromal cells cultured with said later bone marrow preparation is less than said amount of IL-6 produced by stromal cells cultured with said earlier bone marrow preparation, and wherein stability of said multiple myeloma status is indicated if said amount of IL-6 produced by stromal cells cultured with said later bone marrow preparation is similar to said amount of IL-6 produced by stromal cells cultured with said earlier bone marrow preparation.

28. (Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein said bone marrow preparation is from an individual diagnosed with indolent multiple myeloma. --

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Please add claims 29-35.

C6

-- 29. The method of claim 1, wherein said bone marrow preparation is from an individual diagnosed with monoclonal gammopathy of undetermined significance.

30. The method of claim 4, wherein said multiple myeloma-related plasmaproliferative disorder is indolent multiple myeloma.

31. The method of claim 4, wherein said multiple myeloma-related plasmaproliferative disorder is monoclonal gammopathy of undetermined significance.

32. A method of quantitating IL-6, said method comprising:  
(a) providing a bone marrow preparation from an individual diagnosed with a multiple myeloma-related plasmaproliferative disorder; and  
(b) quantitating the amount of IL-6 produced by stromal cells cultured with said bone marrow preparation, wherein progression to multiple myeloma is indicated if said amount of IL-

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6 produced by said stromal cells is greater than the amount of IL-6 produced by stromal cells cultured with a standard amount of IL-1 $\beta$ , and wherein progression to multiple myeloma is not indicated if said amount of IL-6 produced by said stromal cells is less than or similar to the amount of IL-6 produced by stromal cells cultured with a standard amount of IL-1 $\beta$ .

33. The method of claim 32, wherein said multiple myeloma-related plasmaproliferative disorder is smoldering multiple myeloma.

34. The method of claim 32, wherein said multiple myeloma-related plasmaproliferative disorder is indolent multiple myeloma.

35. The method of claim 32, wherein said multiple myeloma-related plasmaproliferative disorder is monoclonal gammopathy of undetermined significance. --

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